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December 5, 2001

The Honorable J. Frederick Motz, Chief Judge
U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland
101 W. Lombard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

C/o Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052

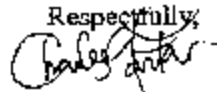
Dear Judge Motz,

I would like to take this opportunity during the public comment period to offer my opinion on the settlement proposal made by Microsoft to the class action lawsuits. As an economics professor at Merrimack College in Massachusetts, I am interested in seeing these suits end, so that Microsoft and her competitors can all get back to the important business of growing the information economy so necessary to getting us out of our present recession.

Perhaps more importantly, I write as an active citizen, one who has invested his personal time and talents in the Lawrence Public Schools here in Massachusetts. The city of Lawrence is the 23rd poorest city in the nation, and its public schools are critical to whatever turnaround is going to happen in the community. It is with this in mind that I am so excited by the prospects of the Microsoft education foundation proposal. Microsoft's offer in November to settle the 100+ class action product pricing cases by funding a \$1 billion technical assistance and support program for America's neediest schools is momentous in its potential impact.

It is my opinion that as a practical matter this type of corporate financial commitment to educational technology will have an immediate and quantifiable impact on the public schools in the city of Lawrence. On a more global level, this proposal of Microsoft's is corporate citizenry at its best and public assistance at its most meaningful.

I will leave the legal arguments to others more qualified to speak to them, but as for implications for the economy and public education, I am convinced: the settlement is a good deal for America, its economy and its schools. I hope you see the wisdom in this proposal.

Respectfully,

Charles Tontar